



IFW AP/2142

Patent  
Docket No.: SONY-50M2430.01

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Edward B. Eytchison

Serial No.: 09/ 476,419

Examiner: Blair, Douglas B.

Filed: 12/30/99

Art Unit: 2142

Confirmation No.: 7826

For: A RESOURCE MANAGER FOR PROVIDING USER-DEPENDENT ACCESS CONTROL FOR A NETWORK OF CONSUMER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450  
Sir:

Transmittal of an Appeal Brief  
(Under 37 CFR §1.192)

☒ Transmitted herewith, in triplicate, is the APPEAL BRIEF in this application with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on: 6/21/04

- ☒ The application is on behalf of other than a small entity  
☐ The application is on behalf of a small entity.  
☐ A verified statement of small entity status is attached.  
☐ A verified statement of small entity status has been previously filed herein.

Fee Calculation (for other than a small entity)		
Filing Appeal Brief	\$330	\$330.00
Total Fees		\$330.00

PAYMENT OF FEES

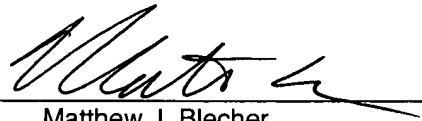
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Date: 22 Aug 2004

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Applicant: Eytchison Patent Application  
Application No.: 09/476,419 Group Art Unit: 2142  
Filed: December 30, 1999 Examiner: Blair, Douglas B.  
For: A RESOURCE MANAGER FOR PROVIDING USER-DEPENDENT ACCESS  
CONTROL FOR A NETWORK OF CONSUMER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

APPEAL BRIEF

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### Real Party in Interest

The assignees of the present invention are Sony Corporation and Sony Electronics Inc.

### Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interferences known to the Appellants.

### Status of Claims

Claims 1-42 have been rejected. This appeal involves Claims 1-42.

### Status of Amendments

An amendment has not been filed subsequent to the final rejection.

### Summary of Invention

Independent Claims 1, 9, 17, 24, and 33 of the present application pertain to embodiments associated with a resource manager that provides user-specific access control for services offered via a network of consumer electronic devices. By configuring the network's resource manager with an access policy that dictates a condition under which a particular service request is permissible for a specific user, the claimed embodiments of the present invention advantageously allow for dictating the conditions under which services or use of network resources are granted to a particular user.

As recited in Claims 1-8, methods of operating a plurality of consumer electronic devices coupled together to form a network 200 (Figure 2) are described. Figure 7 of the application depicts a flowchart illustrating steps of these embodiments. A resource manager 320 (Figure 3) receives 710 a service request from a user. The service request includes a request for a service available via network 200 with regard to the specific device that provides that service, and it also includes a user identity. Resource manager 320 determines 720 the identity of the user making the service request, checks 730 an access policy statement database, and determines 740 whether the service request violates any access policy statements. If it is determined that no policy statement is violated, resource manager 320 determines 755 if the resources necessary to carry out the requested service are available. If the resources are available, resource manager 320 sends 760 appropriate control signals to the devices (or device proxies) of network 200 to cause the devices to carry out the requested service. Reference is made at least to page 14, line 25 through page 17, line 10 of the specification. Reference is further made at least to page 17, line 12 through page 19, line 17 of the specification.

Claims 9-42 recite embodiments of the invention similar to those described above in conjunction with the flowchart of Figure 7 of the application.

### Issues

Issue 1 -- Are Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 13-18, and 21-23 patentable over United States Patent 6,239,466 by Zondag, hereinafter "Zondag", in view of United States Patent 6,118,774 by Sturgeon et al., hereinafter "Sturgeon"?

Issue 2 -- Are Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19 and 20 patentable over Zondag in view of Sturgeon, and further in view of United States Patent 6,311,207 by Mighdoll et al., hereinafter "Mighdoll"?

Issue 3 -- Are Claims 24-42 patentable over Zondag in view of United States Patent 6,567,979 by deCarmo, hereinafter "deCarmo"?

### Grouping of Claims

For each ground of rejection that applies to more than one claim, such additional claims, to the extent separately identified and argued below, do not stand or fall together. For purposes of appeal, the claims are grouped as follows:

Group 1: Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 9, 10, 13-18, and 21-23

Group 2: Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, and 20

Group 3: Claims 24-42

## Argument Specifically Addressing Each Claim Group

### A. Scope and Content of the Prior Art

#### Zondag, U.S. Patent No. 6,638,946

Zondag discloses a method for managing the functionality of a consumer electronics system. In effect, Zondag discloses a communication system for controlling the functionality of a controlled station. More particularly, Zondag discloses a method for managing a consumer electronic system irrespective of the identity of a particular user and without considering an access policy for dictating user access to a particular service request. The functionality is controlled according to an abstract representation (AR) associated with each controlled station (Abstract). An AR is defined as "an interface for software elements in the system to control the functionality of the controlled station by means of messages exchanged with the AR via the communications network" (col. 1, lines 10-13). Specifically, each controlled station has an associated AR. The AR is mapped into internal control mechanisms and controls underlying the hardware/software for each controlled station (col. 1, lines 45-50). In essence, the AR provides an interface for allowing the controller station to access the functionality of each controlled station.

Applicant understands each AR to control the interface between a controlled station and the controller station. In particular, the AR is device-dependent, and is in no way reliant on the identity of a user. Furthermore, the AR does not limit or control access to a controlled station based on the identity of a user. On the contrary, the AR



is independent of a user's identity. While the AR can control the functionality of the controlled station, the functionality is not controlled based on user identity.

Sturgeon et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,118,774

Sturgeon discloses a parental blocking system in a DVD integrated entertainment system. In particular, Sturgeon discloses a DVD unit that establishes a list of users and corresponding restrictions for each user. Specifically, the system of Sturgeon provides for blocking access to the content of a DVD based on existence or absence of Parental Management Information (PMI) that is resident on the DVD.

Mighdoll et al., U.S. Patent 6,311,207

Mighdoll discloses a server system that provides a client system with a number of on-line services, including a log-in service.

DeCarmo, U.S. Patent 6,567,979

DeCarmo discloses a DVD environment in which a user specifies a source for providing media content. Specifically, deMarco discloses a DVD environment for providing media content in response to a user specifying a particular DVD (col. 6. lines 18-39).

**B. Differences Between Invention and Prior Art**

**Issue 1 -- Are Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 13-18 and 21-23 patentable over United States Patent 6,239,466 by Zondag, hereinafter “Zondag”, in view of United States Patent 6,118,774 by Sturgeon et al., hereinafter “Sturgeon”?**

The following arguments are applicable to claims in Group 1.

Independent Claims 1, 9, and 17 are patentable over Zondag in view of Sturgeon because the combination of these two references does not disclose each and every element of these claims.

Zondag, for example, does not disclose or suggest configuring a network resource manager with an access policy. The Examiner cites Zondag’s col.3, lines 30-54, as disclosing such a configuration, but this reference discloses only the use of “preferences” by which a user can identify particular preferred controlled stations. Such preferences are not an access policy as recited in Applicant’s claims. On page 3, lines 1-3, of the action mailed 22 March 2004, the Examiner admits that Zondag does not disclose an access policy.

Zondag therefore does not disclose or suggest a resource manager that determines if a service request violates an access policy. The Examiner cites Zondag’s col. 5, lines 1-20, as disclosing such a determination, but this reference discloses only obtaining a device’s most recent “abstract representation” and organizing “abstract representations” among multiple devices.

Further, Zondag does not disclose or suggest a resource manager that determines if system resources are available, once access is permitted, because

Zondag does not disclose or suggest an access policy as recited in Applicant's claims. The Examiner cites Zondag's col. 6, lines 25-55, but this reference discloses only determining if a device has the capability to download an "abstract representation" and a "controlled station" configuration that does not include an access policy.

Applicant agrees with the Examiner's statement that Zondag does not disclose a service request that indicates an identity of a user, as recited in Applicant's claims.

Sturgeon does not disclose or suggest a service request that indicates an identity of a user. Sturgeon discloses a parental blocking system for DVDs in which a "master user" sets "restrictions" for other users. See e.g., col. 4, lines 43-47. Sturgeon's users are required to enter a user name. See e.g., col. 4, lines 48-51. The Examiner cites Sturgeon's col. 2, lines 20-39 as disclosing such a restriction, but Sturgeon does not disclose or suggest that a request for a specific service includes a user identity as recited in Applicant's claims. At best, Sturgeon discloses entering a request to play a DVD, followed by a prompted entering of a user identification and password. See e.g., col. 4, lines 51-59.

In addition, Sturgeon does not disclose or suggest determining if any network resources are available to carry out a user's request, nor does Sturgeon disclose or suggest a resource manager transmitting signals that cause network devices to carry out such a request, as recited in Applicant's claims.

Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, the combination of Zondag and Sturgeon does not make Applicant's independent claims 1, 9, and 17 obvious.

In addition, Applicant argues that the Examiner has failed to state a prima facie case for obviousness because there is no explicit or implicit suggestion or motivation to combine Zondag and Sturgeon. The Examiner argues that such a combination is motivated because the combined functionality "would be useful to restrict a child's access to questionable material", and cites Sturgeon col. 1, lines 42-53. But although such a goal may be desirable, and although both Zondag and Sturgeon address consumer electronic devices, Applicant maintains that neither of these two references provide either an explicit or implicit motivation to be combined with one another in a manner that results in the various restrictions recited in Applicant's claims.

Applicant respectfully argues that Zondag teaches away from Applicant's claims because Zondag discloses a method for managing a consumer electronic system irrespective of the identity of a particular user and without considering an access policy for dictating user access to a particular service request.

Since independent claims 1, 9, and 17 are patentable over the combination of Zondag and Sturgeon, claims 2, 5-8, 10, 13-16, 18, and 21-23 depending from these independent claims are likewise patentable for at least the above reasons.

Specifically with reference to dependent claims 6, 14, and 22, the Examiner cites Zondag, col. 2, lines 20-29 as disclosing both hard and soft resources.

Although Zondag discloses, for example, "abstract representations" and a TV, the

restriction recited in these three claims must be read in light of the base claims.

Accordingly, Zondag does not disclose or suggest a resource manager that determines if both hard and soft resources are available.

**Issue 2 -- Are Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19 and 20 patentable over Zondag in view of Sturgeon, and further in view of United States Patent 6,311,207 by Mighdoll et al., hereinafter the “Mighdoll” reference?**

The following argument is applicable to claims in Group 2.

Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zondag in view of Sturgeon, and further in view of Mighdoll. Claims 3, and 4 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 11 and 12 are dependent on Claim 9, and Claims 19 and 20 are dependent on Claim 17. For the reasons discussed above, Claims 1, 9 and 17 are neither taught nor suggested by the combination of Zondag in view of Sturgeon. Mighdoll fails to remedy this deficiency.

Applicant's dependent claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, and 20 are patentable because the combination of Zondag, Sturgeon, and Mighdoll does not disclose or suggest the limitations recited in independent claims 1, 9, and 17. As discussed under “Issue 1” above, the combination of Zondag and Sturgeon does not disclose the independent claim limitations. Applicant agrees with the Examiner's statement that the combination of Zondag and Sturgeon does not disclose maintaining a user activity

record. Combining Mighdoll with Zondag and Sturgeon still does not disclose or suggest the independent claim limitations.

Mighdoll does not disclose or suggest, for example, receiving a service request that includes a user identification or determining if network resources are available for carrying out such a request after determining if the user has permission to access the service. The Examiner argues that Mighdoll at col. 12, lines 31-46 discloses a record of user activities. But this citation appears to disclose only recording the date and time of a document status change, not maintaining a log of user activities as recited in claims 3, 11, and 19.

Further, Applicant maintains that the Examiner has failed to state a prima facie case of obviousness because there is no explicit or implicit motivation to combine Zontag, Sturgeon, and Mighdoll. The Examiner argues that “keeping track of user activities improves security”, citing Mighdoll col. 2, lines 14-29, provides sufficient motivation to combine. But although improved security may be a desirable network feature, Applicant maintains that without more, this citation does not provide the legally required explicit or implicit motivation to combine references. Otherwise, all prior art that describes improved security could legitimately be combined with Zontag and Sturgeon.

**Issue 3 -- Are Claims 24-42 patentable over Zondag in view of United States Patent 6,567,979 by deCarmo, hereinafter the “deCarmo” reference?**

The following argument is applicable to claims in Group 3.

Independent claims 24 and 33 are patentable over the combination of Zondag and deCarmo because the combination of these two references does not disclose or suggest all limitations recited in these claims.

The Examiner argues that Zondag discloses, for example, receiving a network user's request for output of a media content item and cites col. 5, lines 1-20 in support. But as discussed above, this citation discloses only obtaining a device's most recent "abstract representation" and organizing "abstract representations" among multiple devices. This citation does not disclose or suggest this limitation as recited in Applicant's claims.

Further, the Examiner argues that Zondag discloses outputting a media content item if the user is permitted to receive such a media content item and if the necessary output resource is available, citing Zondag col. 6, lines 25-55 in support. As discussed above, however, Zondag does not disclose or suggest such an output permission system, and the Examiner's citation discloses only determining if a device has the capability to download an "abstract representation" and a "controlled station" configuration that does not include an access policy.

Moreover, Applicant agrees with the Examiner's statement that Zondag does not disclose either the user specifying a media content item source or output device.

Applicant wishes to point out that independent claims 24 and 33 recite that a request for media content item output is made without specifying either the source or output device. Applicant also wishes to point out that the Examiner admits at page 5,

item 18, of the action mailed 22 March 2004 that deCarmo discloses that a user does specify a source that provides a media content item. Therefore, by admission, the Examiner appears to acknowledge that deCarmo does not disclose or suggest Applicant's claim limitations that require that a source device not be specified. The Examiner cited deCarmo col. 6, lines 18-39, but this citation discloses only corporate control of a media distribution environment and a parental management system. This citation does not appear to address a user's request for a specific service, nor that such a request is made without specifying a source or output device as recited in Applicant's claims.

In addition, Applicant argues that the Examiner has failed to state a prima facie case for obviousness because there is no explicit or implicit motivation to combine Zondag and deCarmo. The Examiner argues at page 6 of the action mailed 22 March 2004 that combining these two references is justified because the resulting system would allow a user to "access many devices over a network". Applicant maintains that such a motivation is overly broad and does not provide the legally required motivation to specifically combine these two references.

Accordingly, independent claims 24 and 33 are patentable over the combination of Zontag and deCarmo for at least the reasons discussed above, and dependent claims 25-32 and 34-42 are likewise patentable over these two references for at least the reasons discussed for the independent claims.

Specifically with reference to dependent claims 26 and 35, The Examiner cites deCarmo col. 6, lines 18-39 as disclosing a media output request that includes



output at a particular location. But as discussed above, this citation discloses only corporate control of a media distribution environment and a parental management system. This citation does not disclose the limitations recited in these two of Applicant's claims.

Specifically with reference to dependent claims 28 and 37, the Examiner cites Zontag col. 10, lines 33-67 as disclosing, for instance, receiving, during output of a first media content item in accordance with a request from a first user, a request from a second user to output a second media content item. But this citation discusses only the functions of a "Communication Media Manager" and does not disclose or suggest the limitations recited in these two of Applicant's claims.

For the foregoing rationale, it is respectfully asserted that Claims 1-42 overcome the prior art cited of record, and are therefore allowable.

#### Conclusion

Applicant believes that pending Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 13-18, and 21-23 are patentable over United States Patent 6,239,466 by Zondag in view of United States Patent 6,118,774 by Sturgeon. Applicant further believes that Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, and 20 are patentable over Zondag in view of Sturgeon, and further in view of United States Patent 6,311,207 by Mighdoll et al. Applicant further believes that Claims 24-42 are patentable over Zondag in view of United States Patent 6,567,979 by deCarmo. Applicant submits that Claims 1-42 are not shown or suggested by the combination of

the cited references. As such, Applicant submits that Claims 1-42 are non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art and, therefore, are patentable over the cited prior art.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-42 be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Dated: 20 Aug, 2004

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Appendix - Clean Copy of Claims on Appeal

1. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a plurality of types of consumer electronic devices interconnected to form a network, said method comprising:

configuring a resource manager of said network with an access policy during network initialization wherein said access policy dictates a condition under which a particular service request is permissible to a user;

receiving a service request indicating an identity of a user;

based on said identity, said resource manager determining whether said service request violates said access policy;

provided said service request is permissible, said resource manager determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available; and

provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service request are available, said resource manager transmitting control signals to said network causing said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices to carry out said service request.

2. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of returning a failure message to said user when said service request violates said access policy.

3. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of maintaining a record of activities of said user.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein said determining whether said service request violates said access policy comprises the step of retrieving said record of activities of said user from a log database provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

5. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising:

communicating user identification information of said user to said server;  
authenticating said user identification information; and  
provided said user identification information is unauthenticated, denying said user access to resources of said network.

6. (Previously Presented) A method as described in Claim 5 wherein said resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, and wherein said hard resources comprise said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices and wherein said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices.

7. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 6 wherein said determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available comprises the step of accessing a resource pool, wherein said resource pool contains information regarding availability of said hard resources.

8. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said access policy is stored in a policy database accessible by said resource manager.

9. (Previously Presented) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of managing resources within a network including a plurality of types of consumer electronic devices interconnected to form a network, said method comprising:

configuring a resource manager of said network with an access policy during network initialization wherein said access policy dictates a condition under which a particular service request is permissible to a user;

receiving a service request indicating an identity of a user;

based on said identity, said resource manager determining whether said service request violates said access policy;

provided said service request is permissible, said resource manager determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available; and

provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service request are available, said resource manager transmitting control signals to said network causing said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices to carry out said service request.

10. (Original) A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 9 wherein said method further comprises the step of returning a failure message if said service request violates said access policy.

11. (Original) A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 9 wherein said method further comprises the step of maintaining a record of activities of said user.

12. (Previously Presented) A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 11 wherein said determining whether said service request violates said access policy comprises retrieving said record of activities of said user from a log database provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

13. (Previously Presented) A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 12 wherein said method further comprises:

- communicating user identification information of said user to said server;
- authenticating said user identification information; and
- provided said user identification information is unauthenticated, denying said user access to resources of said network.

14. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13 wherein said resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, and wherein said hard resources comprise said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices and wherein said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said plurality of types of consumer electronic devices.

15. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 14 wherein said determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available comprises accessing a resource pool, wherein said resource pool contains information regarding availability of said hard resources.

16. (Original) A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 11 wherein said access policy is stored in a policy database accessible by said resource manager.

17. (Previously Presented) A home server coupled to control a network of different types of consumer electronic devices, said home server comprising:

means for storing an access policy wherein said access policy dictates a condition under which a particular service request is permissible to a user;

means for receiving a service request indicating an identity of a user;

means for determining whether said service request violates said access policy based on said identity;

means for determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available; and

means for causing respective ones of said different types of consumer electronic devices to carry out said service request provided said service request is permissible and provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service request are available.

18. (Original) A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising means for returning a failure message when said service request violates said access policy.

19. (Original) A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising database means for maintaining a record of activities of said user.



20. (Original) A home server as recited in Claim 19 further comprising means for retrieving said record of activities of said user from database means provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

21. (Original) A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising:  
means for communicating user identification information of said user to said server;  
means for authenticating said user identification information; and  
means for denying said user access to resources of said network provided said user identification information is unauthenticated.

22. (Previously Presented) A home server as recited in Claim 21 wherein said resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, and wherein said hard resources comprise said different types of consumer electronic devices and wherein said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said different types of consumer electronic devices.

23. (Previously Presented) A home server as recited in Claim 22 wherein said means for determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available comprises means for accessing a resource pool that stores availability information of said hard resources.

24. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a network comprising consumer electronics devices, comprising the acts of:

receiving a request from a user of the network, wherein the request comprises a request for output of a media content item without the user specifying a source providing the media content item to the network and without the user specifying an electronic device of the network for the output; and

outputting the media content item if the user is permitted to receive the media content item and if an electronic device of the network is available to output the media content item.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the network comprises a home network comprising consumer electronic devices.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the request comprises a request for the output at a particular location.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the media content item comprises audio and video.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the media content item comprises a first media content item, and further comprising the acts of:

receiving, during output of the first media content item, a second request from a second user of the network, wherein the second request comprises a request for output of a second media content item without the second user specifying a source providing the second media content item to the network and without the second user specifying an electronic device for the output; and

outputting, during output of the first media content item, the second media content item if the second user is permitted to receive the second media content item and if a second electronic device of the network is available to output the second media content item.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the network comprises a home network comprising consumer electronic devices.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising the act of using a single functional manager to receive the first and the second requests.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the request for output of the first media content item comprises a request that the first media content item be output at a first location, and wherein the request for output of the second media content item comprises a request that the second media content item be output at a second location.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the first and the second media content items each comprise audio and video.

33. (Previously Presented) A resource manager for managing a network comprising consumer electronic devices, the resource manager being:

configured to receive, via a user interface, a request from a user of the network, wherein the request comprises a request for output of a media content item without the user specifying a source providing the media content item to the network and without the user specifying an electronic device of the network for the output; and

configured to output the media content item if the user is permitted to receive the media content item and if an electronic device of the network is available to output the media content item.

34. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 33, wherein the network comprises a home network comprising consumer electronic devices.

35. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 33, wherein the request comprises a request for the output at a particular location.

36. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 33, wherein the media content item comprises audio and video.

37. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 33, wherein the media content item comprises a first media content item, the manager further being:

configured to receive, via the user interface and during output of the first media content item, a second request from a second user of the network, wherein the second request comprises a request for output of a second media content item without the second user specifying a source providing the second media content item to the network and without the second user specifying an electronic device for the output; and

configured to output, during output of the first media content item, the second media content item if the second user is permitted to receive the second media content item and if a second electronic device of the network is available to output the second media content item.

38. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 37, wherein the network comprises a home network comprising consumer electronic devices.

39. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 37, wherein the request for output of the first media content item comprises a request that the first media content item be output at a first location, and wherein the request for output of the second media content item comprises a request that the second media content item be output at a second location.

40. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 38, wherein the first and the second media content items each comprise audio and video.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the network comprises a plurality of devices capable of acting as a source for the media content item.

42. (Previously Presented) The resource manager of claim 33 wherein the network comprises a plurality of devices capable of acting as a source for the media content item.